

Message Text

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DEPARTMENT ALSO FOR (AID)

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SUBJ: REIMBURSABLE DEPARTMENT PROGRAM: OMANI INTEREST IN UAE
WATER AUGMENTATION PROJECT.

REF: MUSCAT 504

1. US BUREAU OF RECLAMATION (BUREC) HAS CARRIED OUT UAE-FINANCED WATER AUGMENTATION STUDY FOCUSSED ON UAE PART ON MUSANDAM PENINSULA WHICH IS VERY SIMILAR TO CONCEPT EXPRESSED BY ZAWAWI (REFTEL). TWO YEAR PROJECT AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED BY EMBASSY AND UAE PRESIDENTIAL COURT IN JUNE, 1976 TO SURVEY WATER RESOURCES AND SUGGEST BEST UTILIZATION. BUREC HAS AGREED TO UAE REQUEST TO EXTEND INVOLVEMENT HERE UNTIL MARCH, 1979 TO PERMIT BUREC TO COMPLETE PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS FOR RECOMMENDED FOLLOW-ON CONSTRUCTION OF TWO DAMS IN NORTHERN EMIRATES. BUREC PRESENCE IN UAE NOW BEING REDUCED, BUT TERRY DAVIS, HYDROLOGICAL ENGINEER FOR BUREC, WILL BE IN RESIDENCE IN DUBAI UNTIL MARCH, 1979.

2. BUREC SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATION TO UAE IS TO ATTEMPT TO
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CAPTURE INTERMITTENT RUN OFF FROM MOUNTAINS THAT NOW CROSSES THE FORELANDS AND IS SUBSEQUENTLY LOST TO EVAPORATION OR TO THE SEA. IT PROPOSES THAT THIS BE DONE BY DAMMING CERTAIN STREAMS CHANNELS-WADI BIH, JUST EAST OF RAS AL-KHAIMAH AND WADI HAM, WEST OF FUJAIRAH. IN OTHER CASES, WHERE THE WADI BEDS ARE PERMEABLE, GABIONS (DELIBERATELY LEAKY ROCK DAMS) COULD BE CONSTRUCTED WITH LOCALLY AVAILABLE ENGINEERING SKILLS TO HOLD THE WATER LONG

ENOUGHT SO THAT MUCH OF IT WOULD INFILTRATE TO RECHARGE THE SHALLOW AQUIFER. IT IS ESTIMATED THAT ABOUT 2-PLUS MILLION CUBIC METERS OF WATER WILL RECHARGE THE AQUIFER BY THIS MEANS AT A PROJECTED CAPITAL COST OF ABOUT 13 MILLION DOLLARS.

3. BUREC ANALYSIS HAS POINTED OUT THAT BOTH RAINFALL AND GROUND WATER ARE INADEQUATE TO THE UAE'S POPULATION NEEDS, AND BUREC IS RECOMMENDING A LONGER TERM SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM. THEY URGE THE CONSTRUCTION OF A LARGE DESALINATION UNIT IN DIBBA WITH PIPELINE SYSTEM AND 40 MILLION CUBIC METER WATER STORAGE RESERVOIR IN A NATURAL BASIN IN THE MOUNTAINS 18 MILES WEST OF DIBBA. THIS PLANT WOULD SUPPLY 150 MILLION CUBIC METERS ADDITIONAL WATER A YEAR TO RECHARGE LARGE UNDERGROUND AQUIFER THAT RUNS ROUGHLY NORTHEAST-SOUTHWEST ALONG CENTRAL HAGAR MOUNTAIN RANGE. WATERS FROM THIS AQUIFER ARE PRESENTLY BEING MINED BY OVER USE FOR AGRICULTURAL AS WELL AS MUNICIPAL AND INDUSTRIAL PURPOSES AND WILL BECOME SALINE WITHIN A FEW YEARS UNLESS CONSERVATION CONTROLS ARE ESTABLISHED AND ADDITIONAL SWEET WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPED.

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4. WITHOUT ATTEMPTING TO PREJUDGE WHETHER COE OR BUREC BETTER EQUIPPED TO UNDERTAKE SORT OF FEASIBILITY STUDY ZAWAWI HAS IN MIND, WE SEE CERTAIN POSITIVE BENEFITS WERE ONES WILLING TO INVITE BUREC TECHNICIAN FAMILIAR WITH UAE PROJECT TO PAY BRIEF VISIT TO OMAN FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH APPROPRIATE GOO OFFICIALS. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OBVIOUSLY BUREC TECHNICIAN WOULD NEED CLEAR VISIT WITH UAE BUT THIS MIGHT BE ARRANGED IF IT COULD BE POINTED OUT THAT FURTHER KNOWLEDGE OF TERRAIN AND WATER AUGMENTATION ACTIVITIES IN OMAN WOULD BE OF ASSISTANCE TO UAE PLANNERS AND VICE VERSA. FYI: SENSITIVITY ABOUT UAE - OMAN BORDERS HAS IN FACT PREVENTED BUREC FROM MAKING THOROUGH STUDY OF WATER RUNOFF SITUATION IN AL AIN/ BURAIMI REGION. ENDS FYI:

5. ASSUMING GOO, UAEG, AND BUREC, AS WELL AS DEPARTMENT AND EMBASSY MUSCAT CONCUR, TERRY DAVIS COULD PAY BRIEF VISIT TO MUSCAT AT OMANI EXPENSE TO OUTLINE BUREC ACTIVITIES AND HELP DEVELOP CLEARER PICTURE OF WHAT EXACTLY IT IS THAT OMANIS WOULD LIKE ACCOMPLISHED. DICKMAN

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